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REPORT

OF A

SPECIAL COMMITTEE

OF THE

TOWN OF NEEDHAM,

UPON THE SUBJECT OF A

DIVISION OF THE TOWN,

MADE DECEMBER 6, 1859.

At a special Town Meeting of the legal voters of Needham, on the eighth day of November last past, to act upon the petition of the Hon. E. K. Whitaker and others, for a Committee in reference to a division of the Town, as petitioned for to the Legislature by some of its inhabitants, and to make the necessary investigations respecting Town Paupers, Bridges, Schools, &c., and report at an adjourned meeting, it was voted:—

"That a Committee of three from each part of the Town, be chosen to take the whole subject of this article into consideration, and report at an adjourned meeting, and the following persons were chosen: Artemas Newell, Lauren Kingsbury, and Galen Orr, for the easterly part of the Town, and William Flagg, John W. Shaw, and George K. Daniell, for the westerly part. Voted to adjourn this meeting to the first Tuesday in December next, at one o'clock, P. M. A true copy of record. Attest:

"SOLOMON FLAGG, *Town Clerk.*"

In pursuance of the above votes, your Committee have given the subject such attention as time and circumstances would permit, and submit the following report:—

Your Committee based their investigations principally upon the following inquiries, which, in their opinion, would embrace the most important considerations that may be

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brought in issue during the hearing, if any, before the Legislature:—

1st. The present valuation of the property, real and personal, of the residents and non-residents of this Town, liable to taxation; the number of polls; the value of the real property owned by the Town in its corporate capacity; its public or permanent debt, and the number of its inhabitants by the last census.

2d. To ascertain as nearly as possible the boundary line of separation as petitioned for.

3d. To ascertain what amount of the taxable property is owned or represented on either side of said line; number of polls and inhabitants, and the value of the Real Estate belonging to the Town, lying on either side of said line.

4th. What amount and distance, or length of highways, and number of Bridges in the Town on either side of said line,—their character, mode of construction, and present condition, liable to be supported by the Town.

5th. The number of poor persons who are at present supported or aided by the Town, and on which side of said line they had respectively acquired a settlement in the Town.

6th. To ascertain what would be the relative pecuniary condition of the inhabitants on each side of said line, in case of a division, with reference to taxable property, increased liabilities and expenses to either, and the amount to be paid from one part to the other as an equivalent for difference in the corporate or Town property, increased prospective liabilities, and for loss of taxable property.

The result of these inquiries is as follows:—

The valuation of Taxable Property in the Town, real and personal, as found on the books of the Assessors for the present year, (1859) is $1,674,927

To wit:

Real Estate, ...	1,403,415
Personal Estate, ...	271,512
Number of Polls, ...	669
Number of Inhabitants by the census of 1855, .	2,401
Number of Acres of Land is	15,009

Corporate property of the Town, to wit:

Eight School Houses, the estimated total value of which is	$9,200
The Town Hall and Almshouse buildings, and Farm of about one hundred and ten acres, valued at	6,000

A tract of wood land in Dover, known as the "School Land," of about 40 Acres.

The public or permanent debt of the Town is now . $5,000

The above is an exposition of the condition of the whole Town, as to its finances, resources and liabilities, at the present time.

The line of division of the Town, as petitioned for, as understood by the Committee, is delineated by a faint line on the published map of the Town, beginning at a point at Charles River, about a quarter of a mile below the Nail Factory at the Upper Falls, and running south-westerly in a straight line, crossing the road known as the "Worcester Turnpike" about a quarter of a mile westerly of said Nail Factory; crossing the artificial pond and running near and westerly of the house of Isaac Flagg, 2d; crossing the Rosemary Meadow, so called, near and west of the house of Ralph Smith, running near and easterly of the residence of the late Otis Sawyer, and easterly of the Town Farm; crossing the highway near and west of the house of Mr. Colcord, crossing a road near and west of the house of Mr. Cartwright; thence running and crossing the highway near and east of the house of Mr. Risk, and west of the house of Mr. Knapp; thence running west of the Reynolds estate, crossing the new road leading to Natick, a few feet east of the bridge, to a point on Charles River, leaving the bridge on the west side of the line and the road on the east,—said line measuring, according to the map, from one point on the river to the other, about five and a quarter miles.

Taxable Property as represented by the Assessors' books as lying on each side of the above described line, to wit:

WEST SIDE.	
Valuation of Real Estate, ...	$818,850
" " Personal Estate, ...	112,146
Total property in West, . . .	$930,996
Number of Polls, ...	334
Number of Inhabitants, ...	1169
EAST SIDE.	
Valuation of Real Estate, ...	$584,565
" " Personal Estate, . . .	159,366
Total property of East, ...	$743,931

Number of Polls,	335
Number of Inhabitants,	1,232
Amount of Taxable property on the West side of the line, more than that on the East, is	$187,065
Number of Polls on the East side more than on the West, is	1
Number of Inhabitants on the East side, more than on West, is	63

Corporate, or Town Property, located on each side of the contemplated line, to wit:

West side: Four School Houses valued at $5,700.

viz:	1 in Lower Falls District,	$2,500
	1 " Grantville "	1,600
	1 " West " old	600
	1 " Pine Plain "	1,000
Town Hall and Farm, valued at		6,000

East Side: Four School Houses valued at $3,500.

viz:	1 in Upper Falls District,	$200
	1 " Great Plain "	2,000
	1 " Centre "	1,200
	1 " South " old	100

The difference in value of the School Houses in the West, more than those in the East, is	$2,200

Highways and Bridges.

The length of the Public Roads in the whole Town, as nearly as it can be computed by the map, is not far from seventy miles, and is very nearly equal in length on each side of the line, but that part of those lying on the West side of the line are in much superior condition to those in the East.

The number of Bridges crossing from this Town over Charles River, is ten. To wit:

East of Said Line.

1 at Upper Falls, built of wood, to Newton,
1 " " " " " stone, " "
1 " Kenrick's Crossing, built of wood, to Newton,
1 called Lyon's Bridge, " " " " Dedham,
1 " Day's Bridge, " " " " Dover,
1 at Dover Mills, " " stone " Dover,
1 called Battle Bridge, " " " " Dover,

There being seven Bridges on the East side of said line, three of stone, and four of wood,

West Side.

1 near the Reynold's Estate, new, built of wood, to Dover.
1 at Lower Falls, built of stone, to Newton,
1 " " " " " wood, " "

There being three Bridges on the West side, one of stone, and two of wood.

The Bridges are all in a good and safe condition, except Kenrick's Bridge, having received very material repairs and improvements during the present year. Four of them are built of stone in a thorough and substantial manner. And it is believed that they will require but trifling repairs for a great length of time, unless from some extraordinary cause which cannot now be foreseen. There are six built of wood, but are now sound, with the exception of Kenrick's bridge, which will soon require considerable outlay.

Paupers. There are at the present time supported and aided by the Town, twenty persons, besides two insane persons who are at the Lunatic Asylum.

Of the twenty, two are boys, nine, and eleven years old. The average ages of fifteen of the number is more than seventy-seven years. Three between the ages of forty and forty-five years, and the two boys.

The average cost of their support, including clothing and medical attendance, is about one dollar and ten cents per week, each.

Of the two insane persons, one has a settlement on the East side, and one on the West side of said line.

In equalizing the Future Expenditures in case of a Division, the Committee adopted the following

Estimates:

The value of the School Houses on the West, more than those on the East side of the line, is $2,200, one-half of that sum, $1,100, is deemed to be the property of the East, which, when paid to the East by the West, will make equal that part of the Town property, or will be sufficient to make the School Houses in the East, in every respect, equal to those on the West side of the line.

The Bridges on the West side, being three, may be offset by the same number on the East, similar as to cost of support, which will leave four, all on the East side, which are to be supported at the joint expense of both East and West for all future time.

The estimated cost of supporting those four bridges is the annual interest upon the sum of THREE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED dollars. One-half of that sum, or $1,600, being paid by the West to the East, it is deemed will be a fair equivalent for the increased liability of the East by assuming the entire support of the four extra bridges, forever.

The *Highways* in the easterly part of the Town, being in a very inferior condition when compared with those in the west, the principal travelled roads as well as those that have fallen into disuse from the fact that they are unsafe to travel over, would require an expenditure, it is estimated, of about two thousand dollars to place them in a fair condition: which should be at the joint expense of both East and West, or a payment to the East by the West of one thousand dollars would be required to indemnify the East by its assuming the entire cost of those repairs. But as the West would become chargeable for the cost of improving the road near the estate of Mr. Hurd, also with the improvement of the *Sherborn Road*, so called, both of which have been adjudicated upon and ordered by the County Commissioners, at an estimated cost of one thousand dollars, one-half of which cost belongs to the East to pay, it would reduce the sum to be paid by the West, to equalize the Highway expenditure, to $500.

In searching for a basis upon which to estimate the future expenses for supporting the Poor, it is extremely difficult to find, by any human calculations, a satisfactory solution to the very important question, how many and who may require public assistance? There is no rule by which any elucidation of that problem can be reached. We have the most convincing testimony before us that those who are poor or in moderate circumstances at present, are not those exclusively who may need future aid. When we see young persons, members of some of the most respectable and reputed wealthy families of earlier days, who, in the prime of life, vigor, and usefulness, stricken with maladies which resist the most persevering efforts of the best medical talent, and finally pronounced incurable, after exhausting their own resources and those of their friends, have been compelled to seek that aid, which is always so readily and cheerfully bestowed upon the unfortunate by their fellow townsmen, we are irresistibly led to the conclusion that any estimate made upon results which circumstances may bring about in future,

would not be reliable, and have adopted the only basis that has the certainty of being correct for the time being,—that of the number who at *this time* are receiving public aid from the Town. Upon that basis, the estimated cost of supporting the Poor which would become chargeable to the East more than those for which the West would be liable, is $171.60 per annum, which would be equalized by the West paying to the East a sum that would produce, at interest, one-half that amount annually ($86), which sum would be fourteen hundred and thirty-four dollars.

The amount of property taxable in the West more than that in the East, is one hundred and eighty-seven thousand and sixty-five dollars, which at an estimated tax of six dollars and sixty cents upon the thousand dollars, which is the average tax for the last ten years, would produce the annual sum of twelve hundred and thirty-four dollars and sixty-two cents, one-half of which should be paid to the East by the West, or a sum producing that amount if at interest—which would be the sum of ten thousand, two hundred and twenty-eight dollars and fifty cents.

The whole amount which is to be paid by the West to the East, by the foregoing calculations and estimates, provided a division of the Town is granted, is fourteen thousand, nine hundred and twenty-two dollars and fifty cents.

The Town Hall, Poor Farm and buildings, and Dover school land, or any other property of the Town, real or personal, together with the permanent debt of the Town, and all other matters relevant, not herein before considered, remain for future consideration.

In summing up the whole matter, in conclusion, after a careful examination of the whole subject, estimating the prospective liabilities from the experience and records of the past and the probabilities of the future, with a due regard to justice and equity, keeping in view the theory and declared intention of many of those who petitioned for the division, "that they desire to leave their friends and neighbors in the Easterly part of the Town in as favorable *pecuniary* condition for the present and future as would be continued to them if no change were to be effected," your Committee feel justified in presenting for the consideration of the Town the foregoing report, believing that the results of the calculations therein will be found, by even a more careful and critical investigation than has been given to it, to approximate very nearly to the objects to be attained: that

of equalizing the interests and burdens of both parties in the future, in case the prayer of the petitioners for a separation shall be granted.

The Committee, in submitting the foregoing report, do not express, or intend to express, any opinion in regard to the merits of the main question at issue: that of the propriety or otherwise of a division of the Town. But they endeavor to show that if a division *does* take place, the terms and conditions therein suggested would be fair and equitable; reserving to themselves the right and privilege hereafter, to advocate or to dissapprove of the measure as their own unbiased judgment shall dictate.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

ARTEMAS NEWELL,
LAUREN KINGSBURY,
GALEN ORR,
WILLIAM FLAGG,
GEO. K. DANIELL,
JOHN W. SHAW,
} *Committee.*

NEEDHAM, Dec. 6th, 1859.

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